

# THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AND THE NEW YORK TIMES

*"Something stinks about this whole affair. . . . The stench is there and clings to each one of us."*

Samuel F. Thurston     pen-name for Richard E. Sprague  
Newton, Mass.                     Hartsdale, NY 10530

This article was referred to in the July 1977 issue of PURSUIT. We decided to reprint it because of its continuing interest.

On December 1, 1970, "The New York Times" published a review by John Leonard of two books. The two books were:

AMERICAN GROTESQUE: An Account of the Clay-Shaw-Jim-Garrison-Affair in the City of New Orleans, by James Kirkwood, 669 pages, Simon and Schuster, \$11.95

A HERITAGE OF STONE, by Jim Garrison, 253 pages, Putnam, \$6.95

In the early edition of "The New York Times" the title of the review was:

Books of the Times:  
WHO KILLED JOHN KENNEDY?

In the later edition the title of the review was:

Books of the Times:  
THE SHAW-GARRISON AFFAIR

In the early edition, the last 43 lines of the review read as follows ("he" in the first line below refers to Jim Garrison):

... And he insists that the Warren Commission, the executive branch of the government, some members of the Dallas Police Department, the pathologists at Bethesda who performed the second Kennedy autopsy, and many, many others must have known they were lying to the American public.

## Mysteries Persist

Frankly, I prefer to believe that the Warren Commission did a poor job, rather than a dishonest one. I like to think that Mr. Garrison invents monsters to explain incompetence. But until somebody explains why two autopsies came to two different conclusions about the President's wounds, why the limousine was washed out and rebuilt without investigation, why certain witnesses near the "grassy knoll" were never asked to testify before the Commission, why we were all so eager to buy Oswald's brilliant marksmanship in split seconds, why no one inquired into Jack Ruby's relations with a staggering variety of strange people, why a "loner" like Oswald always had friends and could always get a passport — who can blame the Garrison guerrillas for fantasizing?

Something stinks about this whole affair. "A Heritage of Stone" rehashes the smelliness; the recipe is as unappetizing as our doubts about the official version of what happened. (Would then-Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy have endured his brother's murder in silence? Was John Kennedy quite so liberated from cold war clichés as Mr. Garrison maintains?) But the stench is there, and clings to each of us. Why were Kennedy's neck organs not examined at Bethesda for evidence of a frontal shot? Why was his body whisked away to Washington before the legally required Texas inquest? Why?

In the later edition, these 43 lines are replaced by the following 13 lines:

... And he insists that the Warren Commission, the executive branch of the government, some members of the Dallas Police Department, the pathologists at Bethesda who performed the second Kennedy autopsy, and many many others must have known they were lying to the American public.

Frankly I prefer to believe that the Warren Commission did a poor job rather than a dishonest one. I like to think that Mr. Garrison invents monsters to explain incompetence.

And that is the end of the review. Even the subtitle "Mysteries Persist" has vanished.

Of course, this left a hole in the later edition, and a hole needs to be filled. And the hole was filled, by a section of editorial matter entitled "New Books", which mentions one new fiction book and nine general books.

The evidence of these changes is shown in the accompanying photographic exhibits.

## What happened to John Leonard?

In January 1971, John Leonard became editor of "The New York Times Book Review", having previously been one of the paper's daily reviewers. If he had had any qualms about accepting the surgical change that was made in his review, completely altering its character, presumably he felt it was reasonable to accept the change.

Why should a severe alteration in a review like this take place in "The New York Times"?

The question can be answered. There is some information which sheds light on news handling by "The New York Times" in regard to the softpedaling of questions about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. (There are many examples besides the present one.)

One important part of this information may be found in "The Congressional Record", April 30, 1969, in remarks entitled "Otto Otepka: Victim of the New Team" by Honorable John R. Rarick of Louisiana, House of Representatives, published in the "Extension of Remarks" page E3527. These remarks follow:

(Beginning of Excerpt)

Mr. Rarick: Mr. Speaker, a long-suppressed report on the misuse of the CIA to establish an underground government within our Government has been exposed today in the Government Employees Exchange.

Reportedly the plan of the "new team" in controlling the CIA operation was to "reform" the U.S. domestic and foreign relations through the use of an "elite" who looked to the "spirit of the future" instead of the status quo.

Apparently anyone not on the "new team" who uncovered its sinister plans or interfered — knowingly or unknowingly — was considered a threat and a target for compromise or elimination.

The casualty list from the intermeddlers of the "new team" includes President Diem and his brother of South Vietnam, President Johnson, and Otto F. Otepka.

So that our colleagues may have the opportunity to study this unprecedented exposure in power and to ponder the question, "Who is running our country?" I include the Government Employees Exchange article of April 30 and two articles from the April 16 issue:

(From the Government Employees Exchange, Washington, D.C., April 30, 1969)

CIA's Vietnam Hit L.B.J., Otepka

A highly secret and unknown American involvement in Yemen was the prelude to major actions by the Central Intelligence Agency's "New Team" in its November, 1963, offensive against President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam, against Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, and against Otto F. Otepka, the State Department's former top Security Evaluator, a former Ambassador with close ties to CIA Director Richard Helms, revealed to this newspaper on April 25.

As readers know, the CIA "New Team" was set up by former Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy following the Bay of Pigs "Fiasco" by the CIA "Old Team." Mr. Kennedy recruited into the "New Team" many officials not only from the CIA (such as Richard Helms) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (such as Cartha "Deke" DeLoach) but also from the Internal Revenue Service and the National Security Agency. These agencies and their top members were "knowledgeable" in the exploitation of "wire taps" and secret informers, the former Ambassador said.

Allied with the "paragovernment" (see April 16 issue) of the "New Team" were secret "cooperating and liaison" groups in the large foundations, banks and newspapers, the source added. In that issue, readers will recall, this newspaper reported that the "coordinating role" at The New York Times was in the custody of Harding Bancroft, its Executive Vice President.

New Team Ready

By August, 1963, the "New Team" was "ready" for action on a wide variety of fronts. These included international affairs, especially the Vietnam War; domestic affairs, especially preparation for the 1964 Presidential election; and the "final infiltration" by "New Team enthusiasts" of the State Department, Agency for International Development, the United States Information Agency and the Pentagon, the source said.

The basic purpose of the "New Team" was to "reform" United States domestic and foreign relations through the use of an "elite of committed, humanistic pragmatists" who looked at the "spirit of the future" instead of the status quo and the "dead letter of formal and literal law," the source continued.

"New Team" Targets

In the international field the main target for "reform" action was Ngo Dinh Nhu, the brother of President Diem, of South Vietnam. He had, the source said, the same relationship to President Diem that Robert Kennedy had to President Kennedy.

President Diem had insisted in his dealings with the "New Team" that the war in Vietnam had to be "run by the Vietnamese." Even though he used CIA resources, he would not allow the CIA to become a "paragovernment" in Vietnam. The Diem and Nhu alliance in Vietnam thus stood in the way of "americanizing" the war there and using the war's opportunity to transform South Vietnam along the lines of the "New Team" program, the source said.

Robert William Komer

While relations between President Diem and the "New Team" were disintegrating, a final thrust for "americanizing" the Vietnam War was supplied by Robert William Komer, a career CIA intelligence officer who, from 1947 through 1960, had won the confidence of such top CIA officials as William Langer, Sherman Kent, Robert Amory and William Bundy.

In February, 1961, Mr. Komer was "transformed" from an "Intelligence" into an "Operations Officer" when he joined the National Security Council Staff at the request of McGeorge Bundy, the brother of William Bundy.

Following the "Bay of Pigs," the United States engaged in a series of "guerrilla wars" throughout the world, including Vietnam, Laos, Thailand. Most of them have secret CIA operations, especially of the "counter-insurgency" type.

"Mr. Komer's War"

The most secret, however, of these CIA wars was "Mr. Komer's war" in Yemen which was a testing ground for the CIA in the use of "paramilitary and paradiplomatic techniques," the former Ambassador revealed.

## Books of The Times

## Who Killed John F. Kennedy?

By JOHN LEONARD

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Bad vibrations.

New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison arrested New Orleans businessman Clay Shaw, charging that Mr. Shaw conspired to assassinate President John F. Kennedy. Mr. Shaw was acquitted by a jury. Mr. Garrison then had Mr. Shaw re-arrested on two charges of perjury. Mr. Shaw is suing Mr. Garrison, and a host of others. The judge at Mr. Shaw's trial has since been arrested in a motel room where stag movies and loose women are alleged to have exhibited themselves. The principal witness against Mr. Shaw has since been arrested for burglary. Mr. Garrison has since been accused of molesting a 13-year-old boy at the New Orleans Athletic Club, which is interesting because Mr. Shaw allegedly had links with the New Orleans homosexual underground.

No, this is not a fiction by Gore Vidal. It is a serialized novel on the front pages of our daily newspapers. Maybe that explains why novelist James Kirkwood—"Good Times/Bad Times"—got obsessed with the subject. Mr. Kirkwood met Mr. Shaw, and believed his story, and so wrote a sympathetic article before the trial (published by Esquire) and an indignant article after the trial (rejected by Playboy) and this tome-stone of a book (troubling the reviewer): Did Clay Shaw know David Ferrie and Lee Harvey Oswald? Is Jim Garrison paranoid about the Federal government? One wishes the whole business were a fevered invention.

## 'Perjury' Atop 'Conspiracy'

It isn't, Mr. Kirkwood argues in "American Grotesque" that Jim Garrison used Clay Shaw to try the Warren Commission report; that Garrison scraped the bottom of the barrel for variously sick and variously intimidated witnesses to smear Shaw; that Garrison's guerrillas sought a jury of sub-par intelligence to bemuse with bloody fantasies; that, having empaneled such a jury, they were so upset by the acquittal that they added the insult of "perjury" charges to the injury of "conspiracy" accusations. Unfortunately, Mr. Kirkwood is so conscientious in his reportage that one wonders why so many people claimed to have seen Mr. Shaw with Oswald and Ferrie. Were they all mistaken or lying?

To be sure, conspiracy wasn't proved, and the state embarrassed itself with surreal incompetence. But "conspiracy" is no longer the charge against Shaw; perjury is. We have only Mr. Kirkwood's emotional word on innocence to go by. Such a word

isn't conclusive, not even in a book reviewer's court. Mr. Kirkwood's loyalty to a friend is admirable; his taped interviews with all the principals in the first Shaw trial are fascinating; his attention to trivia is in the best parajournalistic tradition—the little boy who cried Tom Wolfe. But legitimate questions about John Kennedy's assassination aren't answered according to the buddy system.

Which brings us to Jim Garrison's "A Heritage of Stone." The District Attorney of Orleans Parish argues that Kennedy's assassination can only be explained by a "model" that pins the murder on the Central Intelligence Agency. The C.I.A. could have engineered Dallas in behalf of the military - intelligence - industrial complex that feared the President's disposition toward a detente with the Russians. Mr. Garrison nowhere in his book mentions Clay Shaw, or the botch his office made of Shaw's prosecution; he is, however, heavy on all the other characters who have become familiar to us via late-night talk shows on television. And he insists that the Warren Commission, the executive branch of the government, some members of the Dallas Police Department, the pathologists at Bethesda who performed the second Kennedy autopsy and many, many others must have known they were lying to the American public.

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## Endangered Species!



The hairy eagle, whose preserves block development of Central American real estate.

He's one of the ugly, lazy, useless, vicious, or otherwise disagreeable creatures on this planet finally exposed in the book that "rips the lid off the Conservation Movement."

## THE CASE FOR EXTINCTION

An Answer to Conservationists by Morton Stillel, Hon. Ph.D., in close association with Richard Cyrille. Illustrated by Robert Powell. \$4.95 at bookstores.

THE DIAL PRESS

A taut thriller  
—fresh from  
the front pages!

## The Inside-Out Heist

By Thomas B. Reagan

Author of Blood Money

Take a small-town embezzler with a big-time scheme for beating the rap, add a gang of book robbers hired to pull off the perfect "inside" job, and you have a foolproof set-up—until the embezzler's phoning wife arrives on the scene.

Just Out / \$4.95 at bookstores

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SMASH HIT!



Exhibit 1 — John Leonard's review in the early edition of *The New York Times*, December 1, 1970, showing part of the surrounding page.

## Books of The Times

12/1/70

## *The Shaw-Garrison Affair*

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Twenty-five years  
Elie Wiesel  
native town in  
he buried bef

And in that Jewish-less Jewish town, Elie Wiesel found more than the watch — smashed and corroded. He unearthed a Pandora's box of memories — memories as deeply buried as the once golden gift — memories that forced him into a direct confrontation with the past and “an attempt to bring life to words and weight to silence.”

One Generation After is the author's journey through time and events. It begins with the Second World War and ends with the Six-Day War. And throughout this journey, he not only searches his memory, but seeks out the testimony of the survivors to find out what has been learned — what has changed. He is haunted by the feeling that neither the holocaust nor the writings about it have

# One Ge After

## New Books

**ΔΙΣΠΟΝ**

Sombathorn—A Documentary Novel, by Neri Simha Grossky (Black Publishing Co., 1955). A Polish Jewish town is invaded by the Nazis and liquidated.

## GENERAL

Dictionary of Quabine Definitions  
 Edited by Eugene E. Brown  
 (Portland, ME) \$19.95  
 Eugene E. Brown is the President and  
 Other Aspects of Modern Life

lary, by Alfred Cohen (Barney  
& Noble, \$7.50).  
Off the Willow: The Rabbah of  
Jewish Music, by Abraham  
Sutles (Block Publishing Co.,  
\$7.35).

**The Dream King: Ludwig II of Bavaria**, by Wilfried Blum, with a chapter on Ludwig and the Arts by Dr. Michael Praetzel (Studio) Books, Vienna, \$14.95. An illustrated biography.

**The Fourteeners: Colorado's Great Mountaineers**, by Perry Sherwin and Philip Schmuck (Page Books) Swallow Press, Chicago, \$10.

**The Life, Magic and History of the Dog**, by Edward Mary (Grass

& Darius \$3.95). Illustrated  
presenting.

**The Nineteenth Century: The Con-  
tributions of Progress**, edited  
by Asa Briggs (McGraw-Hill,  
\$27.50 until May 31, then \$30).  
A history with 663 illustrations.  
211 in color.

There Are Two Lives: Poems by  
Children of Japan, edited by  
Richard Lewis, translated by  
Masumi Kikura (Simon & Schuster)

The Romantic Tradition in German Literature: An Anthology, with critical essays and commentaries by Ronald Torrey (Dartmouth & Noble) \$7. paperback, \$4.50.

DATE OF PREVIOUS FILE

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# THE 70S CRASH

## and How to Survive It

Exhibit 2 – John Leonard's review in the later editions of The New York Times, December 1, 1970, showing part of the surrounding page (enlarged from microfilm) and the review itself (reproduced from a clipping).